2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Nuclear disarmament: France's firm commitment — Implementation by France of the "13 Practical Steps" contained in the Final Document 2000 Review Conference

Working paper submitted by France

France is fully committed to achieving all the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). With regard to nuclear disarmament, the best proof of France's unequivocal commitment is its concrete record. As President Sarkozy pointed out in his Cherbourg speech on 21 March 2008, "*rather than making speeches and promises that are not translated into deeds, France acts.*"

In 2000, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons adopted in its Final Document (NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II)) a series of measures to be implemented in this area, known as the "13 Practical Steps". In preparation for the Eighth Review Conference of the Treaty in May 2010, France wishes to submit hereunder the measures it has taken since then and calls on all other States Parties to the Treaty to do likewise at the Conference.

1. *Signature and ratification without delay and without conditions of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in order to achieve its early entry into force*

- France signed the Treaty on 24 September 1996 and ratified it 12 years ago, on 6 April 1998.
- France is doing more: in addition to the measures taken at the national level, France remains firmly committed at the multilateral level to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).
- It is thus actively committed to the universal ratification of the Treaty and to its early entry into force.
- This is one of the measures in the action plan for disarmament proposed by the President of France at Cherbourg in March 2008 and reflected in the European Union plan of action adopted under the French Presidency.
- Furthermore, the European Union adopted an action plan that provides for systematic high-level efforts to promote the Treaty, including in the nine

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Annex II countries, whose ratification is essential in order for CTBT to enter into force.

- France's support for CTBT is also reflected in the activities it has been undertaking since September 2009 as co-Chair, with Morocco, of the article XIV conference, to facilitate the entry into force of CTBT.

- France is also helping to strengthen the verification regime and supports the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Specifically, it is participating in efforts to establish a verification regime for the Treaty by building 16 CTBT monitoring stations in France and 8 abroad under bilateral cooperation agreements. Together with its European partners, France has provided financial support of over €5 million since 2006 for a variety of activities, including training, improving the performance of the verification regime and technical assistance to third countries.

2. *A moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions pending entry into force of that Treaty*

- The end to all nuclear tests was announced on 20 January 1996.

- France's ongoing commitment to a global moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests pending the entry into force of CTBT.

- France is doing more:

  – France has dismantled its nuclear test sites and therefore cannot carry out further nuclear testing. It is the only nuclear-weapon State to have dismantled its nuclear test site in an irreversible, transparent manner verifiable by the international community. Between 1996 and 1998, the site was examined by an international expert mission.

  – France, together with its European partners, is calling upon all the States concerned to dismantle their nuclear test facilities as soon as possible, in a manner that is transparent and open to verification by the international community.

3. *The necessity of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons in accordance with the mandate agreed in 1995, to be concluded within five years*

- For nearly 15 years, France has been advocating for the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which is a priority. This is one of the steps under the action plan for disarmament proposed by the President of France at Cherbourg in March 2008 and reflected in the European Union plan of action.

- In that regard, France welcomes the consensus adoption by the Conference on Disarmament on 29 May 2009 of a programme of work which provides for the establishment of a working group on negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, in accordance with the mandate agreed in 1995. It would like the Conference on Disarmament to start its work as soon as possible on the basis of this programme.

- France also welcomes the support expressed by the United Nations Security Council for the start of negotiations on a Cut-off Treaty through the unanimous adoption of resolution 1887 (2009), and by the General Assembly through the adoption by consensus of resolutions 64/64 and 64/29, in the negotiation of which France actively participated.

- France is doing more:

  – In 1992 it ceased all production of plutonium for its nuclear weapons and took similar steps in 1996 with regard to highly enriched uranium. It is observing a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

  – France, together with its European partners, is promoting the adoption by the States concerned of an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

  – It became the first State to have decided, in 1996, to shut down and dismantle its facilities for the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons at Pierrelatte and Marcoule. The estimated cost of dismantling these facilities has been put at €6 billion, of which 2 billion have already been spent. As the representatives of States members of the Conference on Disarmament, non-governmental experts and journalists were able to verify during their visit to those facilities organized by France in 2008 and 2009, the dismantling of those facilities is indeed irreversible. France today no longer has facilities that produce fissile material for nuclear weapons.

  – With its European partners, France urges all States concerned to either dismantle their fissile material production facilities or convert them to the production of material for non-explosive use only.

4. *Adoption by the Conference on Disarmament of a programme establishing an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament*

The programme of work (CD/1864) adopted by consensus in May provides for the establishment of a working group on nuclear disarmament. France would like the Conference on Disarmament to start its work as soon as possible on the basis of that programme of work.

5. *The principle of irreversibility to apply to nuclear disarmament, nuclear and other related arms control and reduction measures*

- France has unilaterally taken exemplary and irreversible measures:

  – Dismantling of the Albion Plateau military site, which hosted the ground-to-ground nuclear component.

  – The only nuclear-weapon State to have closed and dismantled its nuclear testing facility (nuclear testing facility in the Pacific). France now no longer has nuclear testing facilities.

  – The only nuclear-weapon State to have decided to dismantle its facilities dedicated to the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and to have implemented the decision. International experts verified the

dismantling of the facilities during visits organized by France (16 September 2008, 16 March 2009 and 3 July 2009).

– Under the plan of action for disarmament adopted at the initiative of the French Presidency of the European Union, France, with its European partners, calls for the dismantling of nuclear test facilities and of facilities dedicated to the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

6. *An unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament to which all States Parties are committed under Article VI*

France abides by its commitments under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as the President of the French Republic solemnly reaffirmed at Cherbourg in March 2008.

Commitment by the Heads of State and Government of the Group of Eight meeting in L'Aquila in July 2009 to "seeking a safer world for all and to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of NPT".

Reaffirmation by the Security Council, meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government, in its resolution 1887 (2009) adopted unanimously on 24 September 2009:

> Resolving to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in a way that promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

7. *The early entry into force and full implementation of START II and the conclusion of START III as soon as possible while preserving and strengthening the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems as a cornerstone of strategic stability and as a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive weapons*

Does not apply to France.

8. *The completion and implementation of the Trilateral Initiative between the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the International Atomic Energy Agency (verification of the irreversible release from the military sector of plutonium designated as surplus to requirements)*

While not directly concerned by the trilateral initiative, France has contributed to studies for the elimination of surplus United States and Russian weapons-grade plutonium, given its expertise in the area of plutonium use in MOX fuels, through its contribution to the AIDA/MOX programme and the manufacture of experimental American MOX fuels.

9. *Steps by all the nuclear-weapon States leading to nuclear disarmament in a way that promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all*

Reaffirmation of these principles by the Security Council, meeting at the level of the Heads of State and Government, in its resolution 1887 (2009) adopted unanimously on 24 September 2009:

> Resolving to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in a way that promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

Further efforts by the nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally

- As a result of changes in the strategic environment, especially since the end of the Cold War, France has scaled down each of the components of its forces, consistent with the principle of strict sufficiency: France has therefore halved its nuclear arsenal in nearly 10 years.
- France has a stellar record, including a further unilateral reduction in 2008.
  - Complete dismantling of the ground-to-ground component: France is the only State with a nuclear ground-to-ground component to have completely dismantled it.
  - Scaling down of the sea-based component: number of nuclear-powered guided-missile submarines in service reduced from six to four.
  - Reduction of the airborne component:
    - Early decommissioning and dismantling of the AN52 nuclear bombs carried by Jaguar and Mirage III aircraft
    - Withdrawal of Mirage IV strategic aircraft from nuclear missions.
    - A one-third reduction in 2008 in the number of nuclear weapons, missiles and aircraft in the airborne component, bringing France's total arsenal to fewer than 300 nuclear warheads.

NB: Cessation of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons (plutonium in 1992, highly enriched uranium in 1996), end of nuclear tests.

Increased transparency by the nuclear-weapon States with regard to the nuclear weapons capabilities as a voluntary confidence-building measure to support further progress on nuclear disarmament

Transparency is particularly crucial to confidence-building, which is essential to arms control and disarmament and vital to strategic stability. The President of France stressed the importance of transparency in his Cherbourg speech of 21 March 2008.

- France has set an example in this area:
  - Transparency with respect to forces:

- Announcement of a cap of 300 on nuclear warheads: France is the only State to have made public the total number of weapons (rather than just deployed operational strategic weapons) in its nuclear arsenal.
  - Announcement that France has no nuclear weapons in reserve.
  - Reaffirmation of the detargeting of nuclear weapons.
  - Pre-notification of all our space launches and missile launches under the Hague Code of Conduct. Apart from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France is the only nuclear power to give these notifications.
- France is doing more:
  - Transparency with respect to doctrine: French doctrine is regularly and publicly stated by political authorities at the highest level (see the Cherbourg speech in March 2008). The basic features of that doctrine are contained in white papers, which are strategic reviews submitted to Parliament, in reports annexed to legislation pertaining to military programming, and in public statements by the President of France and the Prime Minister.
  - Transparency with regard to practical disarmament measures:
    - Visits (unprecedented among the other nuclear-weapon States) to the former Pierrelatte and Marcoule facilities by representatives of the States members of the Conference on Disarmament, non-governmental experts and journalists.
    - From 1996 to 1998, an international mission of experts charged with assessing the environmental impact of the French tests was given unrestricted access to the Pacific test site, and wrote a report thereon to IAEA. This is an unprecedented step by a nuclear-weapon State.
    - IAEA report on the former testing sites in Algeria, to which France actively contributed.
    - Regular publication and distribution, including within the framework of NPT, of brochures and information on our disarmament efforts (see www.francetnp2010.fr).
  - On the basis of proposals made at Cherbourg by its President, France, with its European partners, called on the nuclear powers to reach an agreement on transparency and confidence-building measures. Consequently, France took part in a conference on confidence-building measures organized by the five permanent members of the Security Council in London on 3 and 4 September 2009.

The further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons, based on unilateral initiatives and as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process

Not applicable to France, which does not have non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Under the plan of action for disarmament adopted during the French Presidency of the European Union, France, with its European partners, calls upon the States

concerned to include their tactical weapons in the global arms control and disarmament processes, with a view to their reduction and elimination.

Concrete agreed measures to further reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems

- France is in favour of reducing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems to the extent feasible and provided that global security conditions are maintained. In that connection it has taken substantial steps containing concrete and confidence-building measures:
  - Detargeting, announced in 1997, reiterated in statements by the President since then, and most recently in 2008.
  - Lowering the alert status of the two components in 1992 and 1996. These alert level reductions concerned both force response times and the number of weapon systems.
  - France in addition has put in place substantial technical resources, and strict, rigorous and effective procedures to ensure that no weapons can be used without an order from the President of the French Republic.

A diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies to minimize the risk that these weapons will ever be used and to facilitate the process of their total elimination

- Right from the outset, French nuclear weapons have been part of a doctrine of deterrence. This doctrine is strictly defensive and severely limits the circumstances in which nuclear weapons could be used, as provided by the International Court of Justice and the United Nations Charter. Nuclear weapons may conceivably only be used in extreme circumstances of self-defence, as the President of France recalled at Cherbourg. Our nuclear deterrence protects us from any aggression against our vital interests emanating from a State.
- The size of the French nuclear forces is determined based on the principle of strict sufficiency. Under this principle, the French arsenal, which guarantees the credibility of our deterrence, is maintained at the lowest possible level compatible with the strategic environment and foreseeable developments in any threat.
- As a result of developments in the strategic environment, especially since the end of the cold war, our forces have been scaled down. France has thus halved its arsenal. The nuclear deterrence budget has therefore been nearly halved in 20 years. It currently accounts for about 0.2 per cent of France's gross domestic product (GDP), as compared to approximately 1 per cent in 1967 and 0.5 per cent in 1989.

The engagement as soon as appropriate of all the nuclear-weapon States in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons

- France is committed to a safer world for all and to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of NPT.
- Concrete nuclear disarmament actions.

- Participation in the Hague Code of Conduct, which will be chaired by France as of the summer of 2010.
- France participates in the Missile Technology Control Regime of which it is the permanent point of contact.
- It participates in the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Australia Group.

• France is doing more and is committed to encouraging the conclusion of new instruments:

- France, together with Switzerland, pushed for the start of negotiations in the United Nations on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons and would like to see such negotiations lead to a legally binding instrument.
- Active support for the process expected to lead to the adoption of a treaty on the arms trade.
- Adoption by France and its European partners, during the French Presidency of the European Union, of a draft code of conduct for outer space activities (confidence-building and transparency measures for the security of space objects).
- France, together with its European partners, is committed to negotiations on a treaty that would prohibit short- and intermediate-range ground-to-ground missiles.

12. Regular reports, within the framework of the strengthened review process for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, by all States parties on the implementation of article VI and the relevant 1995 paragraph, and recalling the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 1996

France regularly publishes working papers under the NPT review cycle, and produces reports for Parliament and the general public. It also makes the relevant information available online (see www.francetnp2010.fr).

13. The further development of the verification capabilities that will be required to provide assurance of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world

• Support for the CTBT verification regime, at national and European levels. Specifically, France is helping to implement a verification system for the Treaty by building 16 CTBT monitoring stations in France and 8 abroad under bilateral cooperation agreements. Thus, completion of the CTBT verification regime is one of the components of the European Union plan of action for disarmament adopted at the initiative of the French Presidency and endorsed by the European Council in December 2008. European support for the verification regime has brought with it a substantial financial commitment (over €5 million since 2006).

• Fostering negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty with verification provisions.

• Regular participation in seminars on this issue.